Elided Cadence

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/26013061.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Wally, Past Molly
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Single Parents, Single dad Will, Therapist Hannibal, Adopted Son Wally, music therapy, sweet and fluffy like cotton candy, Molly and Will were best friends, He adopted Wally when she died
Language:	English
Series:	Part 20 of Bellarai Write AU_gust 2020
Collections:	AUgust 2020
Stats:	Published: 2020-08-20 Words: 1,330 Chapters: 1/1

Elided Cadence

by BelladonnaWyck, raiast

Summary

Sorrow has a scent, bitter and cloying.

Hannibal is particularly well-versed and familiar with the taste of sorrow, with the shape of its fingers around one's throat and the acrid flavor of smoke and ashes it leaves on the tongue.

Will Graham smells of sorrow, but the boy he has brought with him reeks of it.

Notes

Day 20 of AU_Gust Prompts is: Single Parents

This might be the softest thing we've ever written and Will Graham is a hell of a best friend!

See the end of the work for more notes

Sorrow has a scent, bitter and cloying. It clings to those burdened with it, drags their shoulders down and gives them the weary countenance of the lamenting.

Hannibal is particularly well-versed and familiar with the taste of sorrow, with the shape of its fingers around one's throat and the acrid flavor of smoke and ashes it leaves on the tongue.

Will Graham smells of sorrow, but the boy he has brought with him reeks of it. This is their sixth session together, the first one including all three of them to establish a treatment plan and gather information since Will is Wally's legal guardian. The other five have been sporadic at best, staggered out over a nearly three month period when he usually sees his patients once a week at minimum.

Hannibal wonders at what would inspire a man such as Will to take on the burden of raising his friend's child after her sudden passing, contemplating him as one might a puzzle. He knows Will's work keeps him busy, professorship not a standard nine-to-five sort of position.

Hannibal cannot say he would do anything remotely similar, never one for unselfish grand gestures. Though he is very much so one for nearly wholly selfish attempts at seduction.

"I'd like to speak with you for just a moment before you take your leave, Mr. Graham. Wally, you may collect some freshly baked cookies from the kitchen." Hannibal gestures towards the open door of the study. Wally is familiar enough with the layout that he will manage to find the kitchen just fine, Hannibal is certain, motivated as he is by the promise of sweets.

Once Wally has disappeared down the hall, Hannibal turns back to Will, a smile firmly in place. "I notice Wally is a bit behind on his lessons, reasonable considering your schedule. Our discussions during therapy have been fruitful and I believe he is adjusting well, though it would be beneficial for you to set aside time together to work on his lessons with him between sessions, if possible."

Will flushes a little under Hannibal's scrutiny, and Hannibal is sure he will argue or grow defensive at the implication Wally isn't receiving enough care. "I wouldn't know the first thing about it all, I'm afraid. The piano we've got was inherited with the house, and woefully out of tune, I'm sure. I wouldn't even know where to begin."

Hannibal is pleasantly surprised by the reaction and takes a few steps closer. "Perhaps I can start with familiarizing you with the scales," he suggests, nodding toward the piano bench in a gesture that is less a suggestion and more a directive.

Will steps over to the instrument on numb feet, stomach twisting with nerves in preparation for embarrassment, Hannibal assumes. "I really don't know where to start," he insists.

"Luckily for you," Hannibal murmurs as he slips onto the other edge of the bench, not quite designed for the span of two grown men, so he crowds into Will, "I do."

He places his own hands on the keys, moving through the scales slowly before reaching out for Will's appendages to set them atop the ivory. Will is charmingly pliant to Hannibal's touch, allows a near-stranger's fingers to dance over his own, guide them with a fluid grace across the keyboard. Hannibal's lips twitch with an aborted smile when Will glances over at him and then bashfully away just as quickly when they finish.

"Now you," Hannibal instructs, softly but firmly, and Will takes a steadying breath and resets his fingers toward the middle of the keyboard, glancing quickly to Hannibal for confirmation that he's starting in the correct spot. Hannibal merely gives a nod, and Will's fingers move up the scale, not stumbling over unfamiliar terrain, but *dancing* across it. "Very good," Hannibal praises earnestly when he finishes, eyes lingering on the inviting flush staining Will's cheeks a pleasing red.

"Eidetic memory," he murmurs with a shrug, so quick to cast away the accomplishments of his actions.

"Perhaps we should try something a tad more complicated, then," Hannibal suggests, not bothering to brush away Will's hands before he places his own against the keys. Will snatches his hands back quickly, desperate to remain out of the way and ignorable. He twists them idly in his lap as Hannibal plays a still relatively simple piece by Couperin, though Hannibal can feel the man's concentration following his every movement.

When he finishes, he turns an expectant glance toward Will, pleased when he only sends a brief look Hannibal's way to once more ensure he's placed his hands in the correct starting position, and then mirrors the simple tune effortlessly.

Hannibal knows enough of Will to know of his empathy disorder, and he can see the evidence of it in Will's ability to not only perfectly emulate Hannibal's playing, but also in his grasp of the emotion of the piece. Will plays with his entire body, and it's lovely to witness.

"It seems as though you'll have no trouble supporting Wally in his practice," Hannibal assures him warmly.

"What, just because I can mimic a few bars that you play? The only way I'd *truly* be able to understand what he needs to work on is to view it firsthand. And that's not exactly conducive to a private therapy session, is it?"

Hannibal studies the tense man beside him fondly. "I'll teach you as well, then."

"I hardly have the time or money to get *Wally* here, Doctor Lecter. There's no way I can afford what you're suggesting." Will bristles, gaze locked upon the fingers that still rest over the ivory keys. His cheeks are growing pink, and Hannibal suspects that embarrassment is the perpetrator of it. He would seek to strike it down, keep Will comfortable and happy within his home.

He mulls over this admission, his mind rapidly forming another solution that will ensure he gets to see this man for more than the weekly drop-off and pick-up of his adoptive son's sessions. "With your brilliant mind, a visual tutorial is all that is required. I'm certain you

could find videos online that would assist you in this way. I'm told you can self-learn *anything* on Youtube these days," Hannibal assures him.

When Will only casts him an interested glance, Hannibal continues, "I could let you know what Wally and I are working on from week to week, so you could do your own research and learn that way. Perhaps we could set up a weekly meeting to discuss such topics. Wally tells me that he has baseball every Thursday evening. We could get together to chat over dinner."

Will's eyes narrow slightly at that, his face twisting into a skeptical expression. "You want to have dinner with me once a week," he summarizes flatly. "To talk about Wally," he tacks on, his tone not *entirely* devoid of sarcasm.

"To discuss Wally's *music,* yes," Hannibal confirms. "I could not in good conscience, of course, relay anything that Wally chooses to discuss with me during our sessions. But I'm a firm believer in using art to heal, and I truly feel that Wally is benefiting from these lessons. It would only benefit him further to have an advocate at home."

The man beside him seems to contemplate this internally for a moment, frozen completely still for several seconds before his fingers twitch, seemingly against his own will, and twist up and down the keys in a lazy scale.

At great length, he speaks, his words slow and measured as though he is attempting himself to verify their validity as they are spoken, "I suppose I could arrange my schedule to accommodate a weekly dinner," Will considers out loud, his gaze finally darting to Hannibal as he briefly sucks his bottom lip into his mouth and then releases it. "If it's for Wally," he clarifies.

"Of course," Hannibal agrees with a purr, his own smirk twisting his lips boldly and unabashed.

End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoy our collaborative works you should follow us on Twitter and Tumblr for all sorts of extra content and teasers!

We also have a Discord server where you can chat with us, throw us prompts, and post images/art inspired by our work! You may also catch a snippet or two of some WIPs! DM us on Twitter for details!

'Til next time! 💚 💜 BellaRai

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!